

Message Text

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42

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

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FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1999

INFO AMCONSUL ZAGREB

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT PINS YO

SUBJ: EXTREMIST GROUP SENTENCED IN ZADAR

REF: STATE 36381; BELGRADE 5245; BELGRADE 6438

1. SENTENCES PRONOUNCED FEB 17 ON 15 MEMBERS OF ZADAR
EXTREMIST GROUP WERE "LOGICAL" AND "WELL-DESERVED" ACCORDING
TO FEB 19 VJESNIK EDITORIAL. EDITORIAL IS PICKED UP IN
FEB 19 BORBA, TANJUG AND POLITIKA.

2. EDITORIAL TIES GROUP TO "MOST SINISTER INTERNATIONAL
AND FOREIGN FORCES" AND STATES ITS MEMBERS "FIRMLY ADHERED
TO IDEAS OF LIKE-MINDED EMIGRES ABROAD" IN THEIR EFFORT TO
BREAK CROATIA AWAY FROM YUGOSLAVIA AND "OFFER IT TO FOREIGN
APPETITIES".

3. "CONVICTED GROUP IS ONE OF THE LOGICAL CONTINUATIONS
OF SO-CALLED MASS MOVEMENT OF 1971 (PRESUMABLY A REFERENCE
TO NATIONALIST MANIFESTATIONS IN CROATIA ENDED BY OUSTER
OF LC CROATIA LEADERSHIP IN LATE 1971). IT WAS IN
POLITICAL ACTIONS OF THIS MOVEMENT THAT THIS ILLEGAL
TERRORIST-SABOTEUR GROUP FOUND ITS POINT OF DEPARTURE,"
ASSERTS VJESNIK.

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4. COMMENT: MAXIMUM PENALTY UNDER ARTICLE FOR WHICH ACCUSED CONVICTED "ENDANGERING TERRITORIALINTEGRITY OF YUGOSLAVIA" IS DEATH. THUS SENTENCES METED OUT CANNOT BE CONSIDERED EXCEPTIONALLY SEVERE (REF BELGRADE 6438). CONSIDERING CRIMES INVOLVED, SENTENCES SEEM SURPRISINGLY LIGHT.

5. EDITORIAL CONNECTION OF ZADAR EXTREMISTS TO "CROATIAN EVENTS" OF 1971 IS OF INTEREST AS A DE FACTO ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT THESE EVENTS STILL HAVE AN IMPACT, DESPITE OFFICIAL ASSERTIONS THAT THE 1971 EPISODE IS A CLOSED BOOK. ALSO, EFFORT TO FURTHER BLACKEN MEMORY OF 1971 MIGHT BE TIED TO REFERENCES IN PRESS OVER PAST FEW MONTHS TO CONTINUING INFLUENCE OF SUPPORTERS OF THESE EVENTS" IN VARIOUS INSTITUTIONS IN CROATIA, INCLUDING ZAGREB UNIVERSITY.
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